Executive Report on the BSA Mentorship Program

December 2013

History
In 2004, the Berkeley Staff Assembly -- spearheaded by then Co-Chairs Terry Downs and Paul Riofski -- introduced the BSA Mentorship Program to campus. Over a six-month period, the all-volunteer Career Development Committee (CDC) developed a program to match mentees with mentors with a first-year pilot of 13 pairings. In calendar year 2006, 33 matched pairs were created, and interest in the program expanded. Over the four subsequent cycles, participation has stabilized at approximately 50 pairs.

The program continues to be run by a committee of 10-15 volunteer staff supported by a 10% FTE Program Coordinator. A Chair is selected to coordinate the program for a standard two-year term, which ensures overlap in transition between each 18-month cycle.

The BSA Mentorship Program has become a model for development of other mentoring programs within UC and at other universities.

Program Goals
The BSA Mentorship Program pairs experienced UC Berkeley staff from across all campus units with staff who aspire to develop themselves professionally. The program provides a supportive structure in which participants can cultivate contacts, explore challenges, and enhance effectiveness as they design their personal growth and career paths at Berkeley. Participant goals include developing peer support, learning more about management, and understanding campus organizational culture.

Membership on the CDC has consistently been a next step for former mentee participants to further their leadership experiences; the current Committee is comprised predominantly of previous program mentees, including three mentees from Cycle 6 who joined the Committee immediately following their participation in the program.

Selected comments from current and former program participants
“T I have become more open to networking and seeing the benefit of doing professional activities that may seem uncomfortable but can really benefit my career in the end.”

“I have felt a lot more comfortable having conversations about my job growth…and have been more proactive about the job search and application process in relation to my career goals.”

“I have gone on several interviews, and I am less apprehensive about applying for jobs on-line.”

“I feel like I’m really part of campus now – [the program] has added to my ‘campus identity’ in a fantastic way.”

“I have become more focused on fostering the career/professional goals of staff reporting to me.”

“Because of the topics that my mentee brought up, it caused me to examine my own career and work at UCB more thoroughly.”

“Involvement with the mentorship program makes me feel as if I am contributing to an important staff development program.”
How the Program Works

- The program’s 12-month cycle alternates between fiscal year and calendar years, with a six-month planning period between each.
- Mentors, drawn from classifications at or above P3, M1 and S2, are identified by their colleagues through a campus-wide nomination process.
- Mentees are drawn from the Administrative Assistant III level and classifications P2, P3, S1, S2 and PSS 1-4, with P3 able to participate as either mentee or mentor.
- Information sessions are held for both potential mentees and mentors.
- Mentees apply to participate in the program and the CDC offers guidance throughout the process.
- To launch the Mentorship Program Cycle, BSA sponsors a popular networking event where mentors and mentees meet and mingle on an informal basis.
- The Committee hosts sessions to prepare potential mentees for the process of interviewing and selecting mentors. These sessions cover a variety of skills such as informational interviewing, “elevator speeches,” and resume preparation.
- Mentees contact and schedule interviews with a minimum of three mentor participants.
- After meeting, mentees and potential mentors separately submit their match preferences in ranked order to the CDC. The Committee completes the matches.
- Once matched, the mentor and the mentee establish mutually agreeable terms and a meeting schedule, which are reflected in a formal contract for their mentoring relationship during the cycle.
- Throughout the cycle, both mentee and mentor peer groups meet regularly. The meetings are scheduled by the CDC with content driven by the participants.

Survey Results

In order to measure the effectiveness of the Mentorship Program, a cycle-end survey, created and distributed following Cycle 3, has been repeated in each subsequent cycle, enabling statistical comparisons. Both mentee and mentor respondents have consistently indicated an extremely positive impression of the program. However, it should be noted that this cycle’s response rate was lower than in past cycles, possibly owing to the leadership challenge encountered during the cycle, which placed a substantial administrative burden on the Committee and will be discussed in further detail later in the report. As a result, we’ve determined a new approach for distributing the survey and will implement it in the next cycle with the goal of achieving a higher response rate.

The BSA Mentorship Program’s impact on job mobility remains impressive. In this cycle, 56% of mentees reported a career change attributable to the program, up from 16% in Cycle 5.

Data show a steady increase in participation by those with 10 or fewer years of campus service: 60% in Cycle 4, 69% in Cycle 5, and 80% in this cycle, potentially indicating a growing role this program is playing in advancing the careers of new talent on campus.

The Mentorship program complements other campus development opportunities. Many of our mentees have advanced to positions of leadership, whether via formal career positions or extracurricular
participation. A significant number of program graduates now serve in prominent positions within Operational Excellence initiatives and in Campus Shared Services.

Demographic data of participants has been tracked since Cycle 4, and results continue to show that the program is strongly aligned with the guiding principles stated in UC Berkeley’s Strategic Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity.

Survey highlights are summarized in the table below, and data from the Cycle 6 survey can be found in the Appendix.

*not all questions were asked of both groups*
The Current and Future Program

This report covers Cycle 6, which began in January 2012 with 47 mentor/mentee pairs and concluded in December 2012. Cycle 7 is in progress, with 54 participating pairs.

Program Challenges

During Cycle 6, the CDC successfully resolved a leadership challenge that emerged after the Committee Chair accepted an external job opportunity in June 2012, halfway through her term. During the next six months, selected members of the Committee met several times with an Executive Committee composed of past CDC Chairs, former Committee members, and the BSA Chair. We called on their expertise to help us strategize about how best to support the mentorship program without interruption, identify new leaders, and develop a sustainable succession plan.

We discussed with the Executive Committee the role of the CDC Chair in the context of the current campus environment, and we considered the Committee’s past process of Chair selection and grooming. Given that the program’s active six-month phase was fast approaching without an apparent successor, we also considered a six-month postponement of the next cycle to allow time to identify and train leaders.

Working with the Executive Committee, we examined leadership models with an eye toward distributing tasks and sharing responsibilities across the CDC membership. We were able to avoid postponing the program by creating a co-chair model that provides built-in leadership backup. Recognizing the need for a ‘pipeline’ of future leaders, we identified and recruited six additional Committee members from recent past mentee participants and outstanding staff colleagues. These new members brought new energy, skills, and ideas to the Committee. In early 2013, longtime Committee members Kendall Moalem and Mary Graham agreed to serve as interim Co-Chairs through July 1. Their charge was to launch Cycle 7 and identify and train new committee leaders. Betsy Worth and Camille Fernandez became the new CDC Co-Chairs in July 2013.

Administrative Support and Funding

As the program has grown, a staff administrative role has proven critical to supplement an otherwise fully-volunteer effort. Staff Diversity Initiatives in the Office of Equity and Inclusion has generously provided the CDC 10% support from their Analyst position. This position was vacant for 12 months between Cycles 5 and 6. It was filled by Jenny Olmedo in Fall 2012. Jenny is an invaluable resource: she handles the Committee’s voluminous email communications, maintains the program databases, and serves as a contributing member of the Committee.

This staff administrative support position was established in 2008 and initially funded by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Health and Human Services; the position was subsequently supported by Staff Diversity Initiatives within VCEI. During Cycle 6, funding was provided through the Center for Organizational and Workforce Effectiveness (COrWE) in Human Resources. A consistent and secure funding source to support this position is vital to ensure the Mentorship Program’s effective ongoing operation.
Promoting Mentorship
As a popular and prominent staff-run program on campus, the BSA Mentorship Program has been a catalyst for several other programs in various stages of development. The Committee has been approached by universities in the US and Canada, as well as academic organizations that are interested in replicating the Mentorship Program. A representative from the CDC served on an advisory committee in 2011 during development of Office of the President’s Mentorship Program, and the program continues to function as a model for other campuses.

In an ongoing effort to enhance the program and provide resources beyond mentorship pairing, The Committee helps to organize bi-monthly meetings for the mentee cohort on topics such as resume writing, networking, career changes on campus, and building a LinkedIn profile. The mentees are encouraged to take the lead on planning and organizing these events--as well as informal networking sessions--to enhance their career development and leadership skills. Similarly, the Committee plans workshops for mentors that provide them with additional mentoring tools and the opportunity to share their mentoring experiences with their peers. These activities converge to support participants as they build up their leadership skills, and return benefit to campus by doing so.

Acknowledgements
The CDC gratefully acknowledges two founding members of the staff Mentorship Program: Paul Riofski, who chaired the Committee during the first three mentorship cycles with the contagious enthusiasm of a visionary, and Terry Downs, who contributed essential leadership, design and planning for early program stages. Both Terry and Paul are former BSA Chairs, and both retired from the University during Cycle 6.

The CDC would also like to thank Kendall Moalem and Mary Graham for their dedication to the Committee and for stepping in as interim Co-Chairs during Cycle 6. They have also provided invaluable mentorship and guidance to new members of the Committee, offering advice, words of wisdom and encouragement along the way.

Finally, the continued success of this high-profile program critically depends on the volunteer staff of the Career Development Committee, the mentee and mentor participants, and the valued support and participation of UC Berkeley leadership.
Appendix

Participation Survey Results

**Mentee Goals for Participation**

- Professional development: 94%
- Career planning: 88%
- Job search assistance: 19%
- Learn about UCB organization culture: 44%
- Understand how to get things done on campus: 50%
- Develop skills: 81%
- Develop network: 81%
- Gain "big picture": 56%

**Mentorship Program on Mentee Job Mobility**

Since beginning the program, have you moved to a different position at the University?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%

If yes, do you feel that your participation in the program had a direct effect on that move?

- Yes: 90%
- No: 10%
Mentees - Job Classification at Start vs. End of Program

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<thead>
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<th>Job Classification at Start of Program</th>
<th>Job classification Post Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAIII</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Level 2</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Level 3</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Hours Mentees Spent Per Week in Participation

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<tr>
<th>Less than 1 Hour</th>
<th>1-3 Hours</th>
<th>3-5 Hours</th>
<th>5-7 Hours</th>
<th>More than 7 Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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Mentee Education Level

- Bachelor's degree: 50%
- Master's degree: 38%
- Some college: 6%
- Doctoral degree: 6%

Participating Mentees by Ethnic Category

- White (not Hispanic origin): 70%
- Black/African-American (not Hispanic origin): 18%
- Asian American: 6%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 6%
- Black/African-American (not Hispanic origin) (not Hispanic origin): 18%